

2006 PORTFOLIO SCORING STUDY*

KENTUCKY WRITING PORTFOLIO

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Grade 7

Student Signature Sheet Included and Signed



N

(Circle One)

Fill In
Number
Selected

Category/Descriptor

Content area

At least one piece
must come from a
content area other than
English/language arts

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STUDENT SIGNATURE SHEET

(Required In Each Portfolio)

Please read the Note to Students and Teachers below before signing the following statements.

Required Verification Signature

The pieces in this portfolio are my own work. I am the author of all the pieces in my portfolio. I may have talked about my work (conferenced) with my teacher, family, and friends, but I have made any changes and corrections myself. I did my own writing, typing, and/or word processing (unless otherwise indicated by teacher's signature in the box labeled "IEP/504 Plan Adaptations").

Student Signature _____

IEP/504 Plan/Program Services Plan (LEP) Adaptations (requires teacher signature):

Teacher Signature _____

Optional Permission

I agree to allow my portfolio to be photocopied for use by others outside my school as an example of student work. I understand that my name, the names of my school and town, and any other identifying information I may have used in my writing will be removed before my portfolio is copied.

Student Signature (optional) _____

Required Verification Signature—It is required that the work contained in each portfolio is the original work of the student. Every portfolio must include the statement, signed by the student, that the work in the portfolio is his/her original work. This sheet must be placed in the portfolio. If the verification statement is not signed, the portfolio will receive a performance rating of Incomplete.

Optional Permission—The use of actual student portfolios is critical in teacher training and is essential for quality control checks during statewide re-scoring activities. Students are requested, but are not required, to give permission for this purpose and should sign the second statement above if they agree.

Please note that portfolios are included in any statewide rescoring activities even if neither statement is signed.

Dear Reviewer,

I was just thinking—HOW could BAND be related to WRITING??? They're both passions of mine and important parts of my life, so how could I connect them? Then, it just hit me. I imagined a mental skillet banging me on the back of the head. DUH!! How could I have not thought of it BEFORE???

On the day I got my instrument in sixth grade, I simply **COULD NOT** wait to play. I waited anxiously until Mr. M came to our section and taught us our first note. Our first note (me and the other saxophones') was a G, with the fingering: first, second, and third keys. After he finished with the other instruments, he instructed us to play our first note together for four counts. We. Were. **HORRIBLE!!!** We sounded like a pasture full of dying cows—extremely **LOUD** and **OUT OF TUNE** dying cows to be precise. Needless to say, we needed **A LOT** of improvement.

As it was in Band, the beginning of my seventh grade writing got off on the "wrong note." I learned VERY quickly I had problems with three things: description, the use of parentheses, and those STUPID run-ons. Grrrrrrrrrrrrr...

My main problem was, of course, those run-ons. In our music, we have time signatures that tell us how many beats are in a measure and bar lines that separate the measures and phrases (a group of measures that sound like a musical sentence).

Sometimes, I had no bar lines in my writing. I just wanted to go on and on. For example, in an old copy of “Life Lessons, Riding Lessons,” I had this:

You can't just start off hopping and jumping, you have to learn to walk first.

Just about every copy I turned in would have at least FIVE run-ons when I got my copies back. But I learned (the hard way) the three best ways to put an end to those run-ons: add a semi-colon, put a period and capitalize the next word, or comma and conjunction.

But it wasn't *only* the run-ons. As you might have already noticed, I like to use parentheses. A LOT. This was especially evident in (again) “Life Lessons, Riding Lessons.” This was a segment in one of my old copies:

Soon, I had started TRYING to canter (notice the emphasis on TRYING).

Ms. C even had the write “*Look up use of parentheses!” on my paper. I found that basically, parentheses are a shortcut way to add information to a sentence (or in my case, witty and sarcastic comments like this one). In the pieces that followed, I decided to keep an eye on my problems with parentheses and run-ons. In order to do this, I thought about the different ways I could word my sentences.

One other important element in Band is details, details, DETAILS!! When playing music, we have to attack the notes just right (sometimes short and separated—staccato, or long and joined together—tenuto) stress the dynamics (dynamics are the MOST important part), and play the right style (swing, rock, etc.). This relates to my third and final problem: description.

At the beginning of the year, I was pretty good at description, but I *still* needed improvement. To help us, Ms. C. did an activity called Show, Don't Tell—**SHOWING** your audience instead of **TELLING** them what's going on.. Before, I absolutely *hated* taking the time to “paint the picture.” I thought it slowed me down when I was on a roll. After we did the Show, Don't Tell activity, it helped me think about it differently, which helped me add description. When writing “Panther Flight,” I paid *very* close attention to detail and making sure my audience understood. This is an example from that:

I noticed as me moved closer to the sound of the water, the rocks were getting larger and closer together. My mother had to leap from one to the other in order to keep her pace. My senses were becoming stronger now, almost deafening in a way; the water was near...very near...

I used lots of description, and paid close attention to Zokara's senses to—in turn—trigger the audience's senses, to make them feel like *they* were Zokara.

But it wasn't all weaknesses. I **DID** have strengths believe it or not. My **BIGGEST** and probably most **RENOUND** strength was expressing myself.

In Band (and anywhere else in fact), everyone will tell you that I am **VERY**, **VERY** (did I mention *very*?) **LOUD** (both in playing and talking). This, I think, shows through in my personal piece, “Life Lessons, Riding Lessons.” For example:

I tried to grab onto the horn of the saddle and pull myself into the seat...and stay there. But I bounced back and landed on the back edge of the saddle...ON MY TAILBONE!! Sound painful? I have three words to say: ow, ow, and OWWWWWW!!!

If that isn't loud, forceful, and expressive, I don't know **WHAT** is...

In music, there is harmony, melody, and sometimes alternate melody. The saxophone is a *very* flexible instrument; sometimes we play harmony (which is

EXTREMELY boring) and sometimes we play melody. I would MUCH rather play melody. In writing, it's the same thing—I like writing some things over others.

My absolute FAVORITE thing to write are poems. With poetry, I can take how I'm feeling and make my audience feel it. I can take a part of my soul and put it on a piece of paper. Poetry goes beyond the literal and into a world of metaphors. Take for example, my metaphor poem that I wrote, "Depression is a Never-Ending Cloud-Cover":

*Depression is a never-ending cloud-
cover
constantly looming in the distance.
Black shadows cover the Sun,
as the storm moves in
permanently.
The rain starts off light
almost unnoticed
until you hear the thunder crack
and it's too late to take cover.
Raining
dark and heavy
on happy hearts.
Soaking through the clothes*

*till you are
cold
unfeeling
numb.
Then
you find inspiration
about what you have to do.
You can do nothing but succumb.
You look to the sky—
LIGHTNING!!
—then nothing.
Depression is a never-ending cloud-
cover.*

Some people may not understand it, but the end stands for suicide (though I don't PLAN to commit suicide anytime soon). This piece didn't make it to the portfolio, but it was a VERY close second to "Stolen Lives."

Mind you, I am NOT the best sax player in the world, nor am I the best writer, but I think there will be some further improvement—in my pieces and in my playing—in the future. Who knows, I could be the next J. K. Rowling (a little far-fetched, but still possible) or the next Kelly Clarkson (my idol) if I decide to stick with music. I guess I'll just have to keep improving and go wherever the future takes me.

But until that time, I think I'll count the last of my rests and join the clarinet part at measure 27. 4, 2, 3—here we go!!! BREATHE!!

Sincerely,

Panther Flight

Boom!

The shot echoed through the jungle, awakening a small violet-eyed panther cub. Zokara had been sleeping at her mother's side, until a violent wave of fear rippled through her body...

* * * * *

"M-Mother? W-What was that?" I asked, my voice trembling slightly.

"Poachers," my mother said softly; her eyes searching, ears twitching, nose rolled back in disgust. "Be silent...and follow..." She stood up silently and glided into a nearby bush. I followed closely behind her onyx tail. She sniffed the air again. "They're downwind...not too close, but not too far away either... Come, we must hurry..."

I was absolutely terrified; I didn't want to leave the safety of the brush. But I trusted my mother, and I did *not* want to be left alone in the forest...so I followed. My eyes quickly adjusted to the dark to the point where I could clearly see my surroundings. My mother led me through a confusing path with lots of undergrowth beneath our paws.

I should remember that, I thought, to disguise our footprints.

We had to watch where we stepped, as to not trod on snakes, and at some points we had to crawl to avoid the low-hanging vines.

Boom!

Oh no...another shot...They're getting closer... I quickened my pace as my heartbeats began to pound more rapidly.

"We're moving too slowly," my mother warned. "We must move *faster*." Before I knew it, I was hanging off the ground in her jaws. Even with the same jaws that had

killed hundreds of prey around my neck, I still felt safe with her. No sooner had she picked me up, she loped through the brush. I could feel her breath tingling in my ears. She galloped through the jungle, only stopping for breath in the middle of a moonlit clearing to better see what lay ahead. The trees surrounded us, their imposing branches looking like arms reaching out to grab us in the darkness. She laid me down slowly and sniffed the air. At the same time, her ears twitched and jerked, desperately searching for sound waves. She gasped, as I heard it too: voices...*human* voices.

"That's impossible," she whispered, "they're *closer*." She looked around frantically. It was then that I saw something that I had never seen before in my mother's eyes-- fear. In those same violet eyes I had seen love, compassion, and fierce maternal instinct, but *never* had I seen fear. She paused for a second, then whispered, "The river..." As those words left her mouth, I was clutched once again in her jaws.

For minutes she leaped through the forest, not pausing for a second. Soon, my senses seemed to be picking up something...*water*. Then I understood: we were going to cross the river in order to throw off the poachers! But how were we going to get across? Even for panthers, it was nearly *impossible* to cross the river. *Oh no...Mother, don't do this!!!* I thought. There was almost no hope for us to cross the river. *But there MUST be another way!!!* I didn't say anything. I decided my mother wouldn't do anything to harm me, or to get me into danger. I *had* to trust her.

I noticed as we moved closer to the sound of the water, the rocks were getting larger and closer together. My mother had to leap from one to the other in order to keep her pace. My senses were becoming stronger now, almost deafening in a way; the river was near...*very* near...

Any minute now...

My mother jumped onto a final bolder, and there it was: a clear blanket of glistening water right beneath us. I knew what was next. Mother tightened her hold on me, but not to the point of pain. She leaped; I held my breath.

Splash. The water engulfed me as I closed my eyes, swallowing me whole, like a piece of meat too big for my mouth. All time seemed to slow, our movements lethargic in the water. I could feel my mother slowly moving forward, taking me with her. *We're going to have to come to the surface soon...air...need air...* As if she heard me, Mother broke through the barrier between air and water; it was then that time seemed to return to normal again. I opened my mouth and took in as much air as possible, and at the same time, looked towards the other bank. It seemed like a million miles away. The water ravaged around us; waves hitting other waves and rocks. It just seemed like a natural chaos that wouldn't end.

With surprising speed and a burst of energy, my mother propelled us to the safety of the land. As we came closer, I could sense my mother losing strength, ever so slightly.

Please Mother...please let us make it...

We were pulled back with a final wave until we could feel the bottom of the river. I rejoiced as I felt the rocks cut into my feet, spilling crimson blood into the clear blue. We were safe now...we had made it across. My mother stumbled onto the soil, completely exhausted. Water rolled down our midnight fur, like snakes shedding their skin.

She laid to rest for only a minute, then stood back up again. She scanned for a nearby tree...one that was thin and strong with a rough texture for our claws to hang on to. She paused at the tree directly across from us.

"Perfect," she whispered.

She limped to the base, crouched, and sprung to the lowest branch. I squinted my eyes as I felt hundreds of tiny branches scratch my face; more blood shed. We climbed from branch to branch until we found a nice perch to look out over the forest floor. She stretched across the branch and placed me between her paws.

"It's okay honey...You can go to sleep now," she breathed.

"But, what about the hunters?" I whimpered.

"They're gone now, sweetie. Now go to sleep," she comforted, "Shuuuuuuush..."

I rested my head and gently closed my eyes. No longer did I fear the hunters, for I now felt safe, safe in the arms of my mother. I felt I now had the strength and courage to face anything. I stared into black as I slowly drifted off into sleep, comforted by the soft purrs of my mother, ready to face the demons of my dreams...and anything else along the way...

* * * * *

Four years later...

Boom!

"M-Mother? W-What was that?" my daughter, Rayne, whimpered.

I looked down into her frightened face, remembering a time when I myself was the frightened one at the sound of the poachers. I remember being so scared, so panicked I didn't know what to do. But gradually, my mother helped me to gain courage. She

taught me that there was nothing to fear from the poachers or any situation for that matter.

No matter how bad the future may seem, somehow, some way, everything would work out just fine in the end. I gazed into my daughter's violet eyes and gently smiled.

“It's okay, honey, it's alright. There's nothing to fear. Just go to sleep.

Shuuuuuush...” I softly rocked my daughter back to sleep, whispering comforting words in her ear. Everything *was* going to be alright, and if it wasn't, I was going to make it that way...With all the strength I had, everything *would* be alright...

Bullying and Harassment: A Battle of the Sexes

Did you know recent data has reported that for this year so far, there have been ninety-nine D.T.'s issued to boys for bullying and harassment and only eleven for girls? Maybe not, but to be honest, I don't think it's very surprising because of dun-dun-daaaaaaahhhhh...hormones.

At this age, hormones are running high. Girls have calming estrogen while boys have testosterone. The testosterone causes boys to become more *physical* with attacks and when letting out anger than the sneaky, behind-back attacks of girls (which causes the guys to get into trouble more often than not).

I've had lots of experience in this subject. All of my fifth grade year was spent hearing about girls talking about other girls, catfights, and gossip, one incident involving my friend Whitney.

For a while, Whitney and a girl named Samantha absolutely *hated* each other. Whitney was the short and sweet one while Samantha—to put it plainly—was rude and snobbish. For three months, Sam tortured Whitney with constant rumors and gossip. Finally, Whitney decided (more I like I *convinced* her) to get the teacher involved. That settled the argument—but not the vendetta. Sam *never* got a D.T.

I also decided to talk to Ms. Miller, the school secretary, about this. She said the following: "We see a lot of girls come in here to work out their problems with one another, but we don't usually give them D.T.s. We also usually see fighting kids (victim *and* offender, usually boys) to solve 5 problems. That's when the D.T.s come out."

But it's not *just* the hormones; it's also the rate of reported cases. Attacks by girls are *not* reported as often as attacks by boys. When boys use showy displays as means of

attack, there is a higher chance of a bystander informing an adult (or an adult witnessing it personally). With girls, only the people in on the gossip have the ability to report it, but most of the time don't for fear of being criticized in the process.

I thought I'd ask Ms. Holder, my Social Studies teacher, on this subject. "I very rarely ever hear of attacks by girls," she states, "but I don't doubt that it *does* happen."

But it's also a question of nature. Girls usually think before acting. Guys? Not as much...

I swear, everyday, there is that *one* person I just want to beat the crap out of, but I always think: what will be the consequences? Usually, my Star Card. I love that little thing, and I can't imagine NOT getting one. This is why I, personally, do NOT bully (that, and the fact that I'd feel bad about it later on).

This reason also reminds me of Harry Potter, oddly enough. The one thing that ALWAYS gets on my nerves about Harry is that he NEVER thinks BEFORE acting!! I sometimes just want to stomp right into the book, grab Harry by the hair, bang his head into the wall, and calmly yell about how much of an idiot he's being. For example, in the sixth book, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (if you haven't read it yet, do NOT, I repeat, DO NOT PROCEED) when Harry used the invisibility cloak to overhear Malfoy and the Slytherins' conversation in the train compartment. Harry just impulsively decides to sneak in and listen to their conversation and where just WHERE did THAT decision lead him? Immobilized on the floor, a bloody nose, and the cloak over his body which later caused him to miss the sorting of the first years.

For me, this can only prove that girls are indeed *better* than the boys at avoiding D.T.s for bullying and harassment. However, that does not mean it doesn't occur JUST as often; it simply means that they are better at *avoiding* it.

But if you are a guy reading this—and you think I *completely* do not understand you—then that's okay. If (according to you) do not understand the male race, then I guess you don't, and never will, understand me. I'm *completely* fine with that. Just remember one thing: you've received ninety-nine D.T.s; the girls have only received eleven. Just one question: does that surprise you?

Siting Sources:

C V Middle School "Student
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